



CHIEF's Sight Picture

6 March 2003

CORONA South 2003

Our Air Force's senior leadership gathered at CORONA South 2003 to address the complex issues facing our Service -- increasing deployment demands and home station tempo, contingency planning, and the challenges inherent in managing our aging systems and infrastructure. With common purpose, we focused our attention on those essential areas that make us the world's dominant air and space power.

Leadership Focus

It's important that every leader thoroughly understands, reviews, and communicates the significance of their unit's responsibilities and requirements to total Air Force success. That's why our senior leaders spent the entire first day of CORONA South 2003 attending the Senior Leaders' Maintenance Course (SLMC). We want to ensure that every airman, from our junior-most enlisted to our senior-most leaders, fully understands the vital relationship between the two equally demanding fields of maintenance and operations. This enabled us to reinforce the importance of the Combat Wing Organization at the senior leadership level, a vitally important effort to refocus our operators on being the premier employers of air and space power, while allowing our maintainers to develop the skills and expertise levels necessary to generate the highest sortie production rates possible.

Our expeditionary force continues to provide world-class capabilities to joint operations; however, we need to continue to ensure we present our forces smartly. As taskings and operations emerge, the structure and tracking of unit type codes (UTCs) becomes a key linchpin to senior leader management of their forces. New battle rostering tools will be established throughout the force to enable leaders at all levels to properly train, equip, and track their own forces prior to and during any contingency or tasking.

While we continue to examine how we train and provide our forces to meet joint and deployment requirements, we must also review the policies and processes of how we manage our forces internally. We spent considerable time addressing "stressed career fields," our number one force management concern. We are reassessing the basic structure, assignment, and training of the most stressed career fields and are reviewing and making determinations in the basics of who should fill, how we fill, and how we fix undermanned career fields. This is an on-going effort, but one in which we are making progress.

Making It Work

Leaders at every level, from headquarters through squadron, must clearly communicate the AEF story -- every airman, officer or enlisted, must understand the basics of the AEF and its cycle and instill the expeditionary mindset in everything we do. "Expeditionary" is our normal state of operations and everyone must continue to embrace this reality.

But we've discovered the word still needs to get out. Communications remains a leader's most critical tool and commander's calls are a key conduit for getting the word out, from wing through squadron levels. But we encourage all leaders to consider other methods too. Our airmen are brave, disciplined warriors, whether in the field or in CONUS. We need to ensure they understand how absolutely critical they are to our mission and the security of our nation. We must also keep the lines of communication to our external audience open as well. As we engage with them, it's important that we maintain a culture of honesty and trust and follow our core values.

As we standardize our air operations centers (AOC) worldwide, it's important that we strive to standardize our training. Many career fields can be comparably trained regardless of location, allowing for continual flow of qualified people into AOCs. All commanders should look closely at the proper training and management of their airmen. For instance, we looked at how our Functional Area Managers (FAMs) are trained and supported. Since the current FAM structure is a Cold War construct swept up into today's AEF construct, a thorough review of FAM training and manning must occur. We have begun the process. No organization or group can successfully support the expeditionary mentality without having the proper structure or tools. And no one will be left behind.

Conclusion

Our men and women are doing tremendous work in spite of the myriad of challenges before them. We owe it to these fine airmen to ensure they have the tools to do their jobs. Whatever our future holds, our outstanding, well-trained, and the well-equipped warrior airmen will guarantee our dominance as the world's premier air and space power.



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